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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0915
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 3847
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1665
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1532
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 2101
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS ASHGABAT 000692

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN MANUEL MICALLER AND ROBERT DEUTSCH

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [EINT](#) [ETRD](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: FOLLOW-UP TO CENTRAL AND SOUTH ASIA REGIONAL
TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY FORUM: PROPOSED FIBER OPTIC CONFERENCE IN
BAKU, AZERBAIJAN

REF: STATE 42174

¶1. Per reftel request, the Embassy on April 30, 2008 conveyed to Turkmenistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs a diplomatic note regarding USTDA's plan to organize a follow-up conference in September 2008 in Baku, Azerbaijan to the April 2007 Central and South Asia Regional Telecommunications Policy and Regulatory Forum in Almaty. In its note, the Embassy also conveyed the questionnaire to the Ministry of Communications of Turkmenistan. As of May 30, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not provided answers to the questionnaire and has not indicated whether the Ministry of Communications is interested in participating in the Baku conference. However, the Ministry did say that it is working on the request and will provide a response shortly. The information in the questionnaire is not available in the public sector, so post is unable to answer those questions. However, we are providing responses to the second set of questions -- those that USTDA requested embassies answer.

TURKMENISTAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM OPERATORS

¶2. List of all system operators (fixed-line, mobile, data, and Internet services, public and private sector):

-- FIXED LINE: There is only one fixed line, provided by Turkmenistan's State Telephone Network, a public-system operator. It provides service within Turkmenistan, and international services. Domestic calling fees are the same, regardless of the phone call's point of origin and destination. International calling fees vary from country to country.

-- MOBILE: Currently, there are two mobile phone networks operating in Turkmenistan: MTS (Mobile Tele Systems) and TM Cell.

a) MTS is a Russian Joint Stock Company. Currently MTS provides service to 80 percent of Turkmenistan's mobile phone users. MTS plans by the end of 2008 to have one million subscribers. In April 2008, MTS began providing Internet services to private companies and public organizations via a blackberry-type GPRS system, at a fee of \$1.00 per megabyte of transferred data.

b) TM Cell -- also known as "Altyn Asyr," is a Turkmen state-owned company serving the remaining 20 percent of mobile phone users. Until March 2008, TM Cell had a very small number of subscribers due to the company's very limited technical capacity. However, in March it started expanding its operations and is now providing service in most districts and towns throughout Turkmenistan.

-- DATA: Post does not have any information on data system operators.

-- INTERNET: The state-owned company, "Turkmen Telecom," is the only public Internet service provider. It provides a dial-up Internet connection to a very limited number of government agencies, private businesses and independent citizens. Currently, there are eight official Internet exchange points in the form of Internet cafes: four in the city of Ashgabat, and one in each of the capitals of four provinces of Turkmenistan (all provinces, except for Ahal, of which Ashgabat is the de facto capital). The state-run Internet cafes are open daily except for Sunday, from 09:00 to 18:00 and charge about \$2.00 per hour. As mentioned above, MTS is also providing Internet service via GPRS, which is the first non-governmental Internet service. Although MTS' Internet service is currently available only to legal entities, it most likely will be extended to private citizens in the future.

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